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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A COLONIAL MONASTERY.

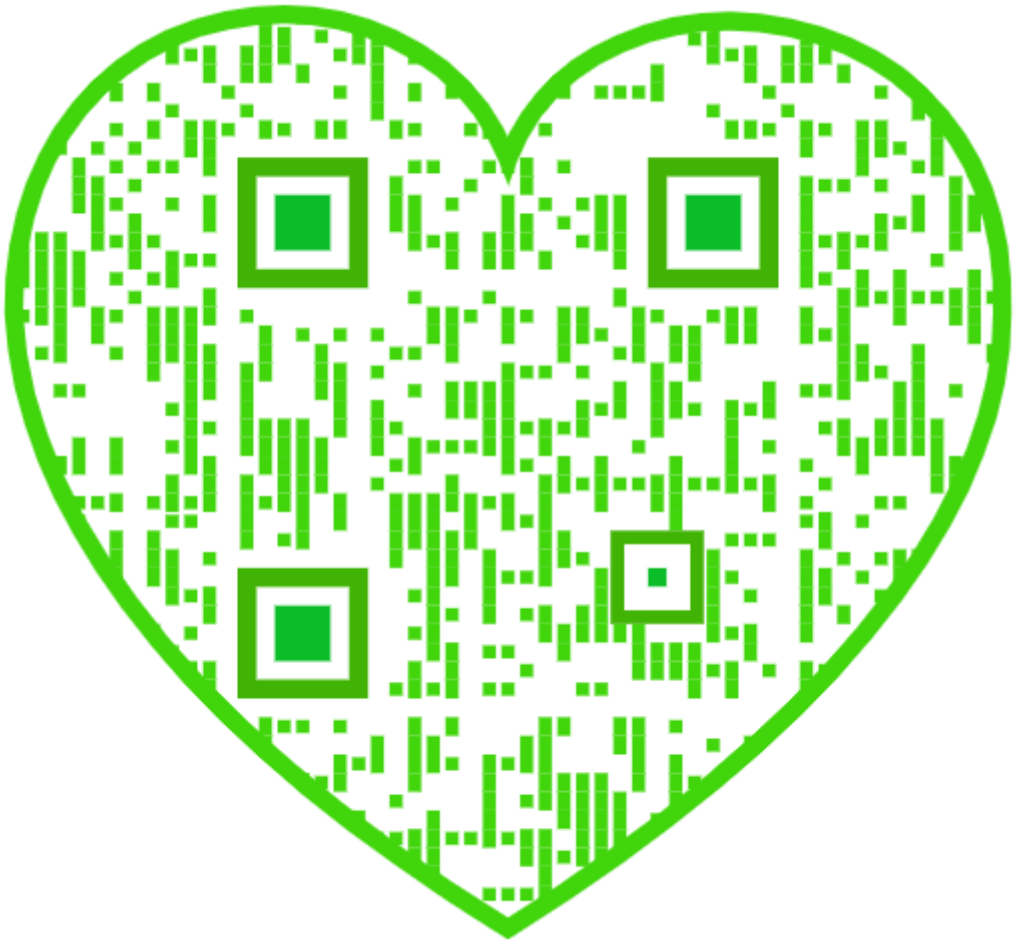
SAAL AND SARON, EPHRATA, PENNSYLVANIA.

ANTIQUARIAN hankerings do not find much material to feast upon in America—at least not in the line of our own race. We have no lumber-rooms of history, no remains of architecture illustrative of the march of civilization.

There is, however, one little-known place where we can breathe the musty air of lang syne, and feast our fancy with the visions of a by-gone period.

Ephrata, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, lies on the Reading and Columbia railroad, about twenty miles from Reading and thirteen miles from Lancaster. There is nothing peculiar about the village itself or its people. They speak—as is general in that neighborhood—two languages, English and Pennsylvania German. A stranger, arriving at Ephrata in the summer season, would probably go first to the Ephrata Mountain Springs, a pleasure resort on a lofty ridge, noted for its salubrious air, excellent water, and delightful outlook. But it is not there we want to go. We ask for the "Cloister," and are told to follow the road that runs north-west.

After walking about half a mile, we come to a bridge which crosses the Cocalico—a name which occurs frequently in the Chronicles of Ephrata, and, by the by, is derived from *koch-hale-kung*, *i. e.*, cave of serpents. A path on the left, which leads past a grist-mill, brings us to an open grassy plot, from which we see odd-looking, antiquated buildings, the larger of which are the convents, the former abodes of the Ephrata monks and nuns. Their high gable roofs and the irregularly distributed little windows, measuring about two feet square, give them a peculiar appearance. The outside walls are covered with shingles, turned black by age and exposure. In their striking contrast with the green turf upon which they stand and the bright foliage that greets us from all sides, these dark, ill-shapen, gloomy masses look like a ghostly birth of the night thrust into a world of beauty and promise. Stepping up to the nearest building, the southernmost of the group, we find the door-sill flush with the ground. The door is low and narrow, as if made for



beings of slender proportions. There is no such thing as a bell or a knocker, and, entering, we find ourselves in a narrow, dimly lighted passage-way running from one end of the building to the other—a length of about seventy-five feet. The floor is of hard plaster. On each side we observe a number of doors, so low that only persons of short stature can enter without stooping. Nothing stirs, and our footsteps echo dismally through the long corridor. We seem to be in an enchanted house, haunted by the spirits of the solitary brethren and the world-renouncing sisters.

We open one of the doors and enter a low, whitewashed room, lighted by two square windows. Its simple and substantial swing on wooden hinges, and have wooden latches but no locks. Here the monks, or "Solitary Brethren," rested at night on a bench, with a billet of wood for a pillow. Formerly, there were ten such chambers on the southern side, and as many doors may be counted now, but some of the apartments have been connected with others by removing the partitions. On the opposite side there are three spacious rooms, each connected with several narrow cells of the same description as the chambers just noted; these were intended for brethren that roomed together. In the middle of the building the corridor is crossed by a wide passage that leads to a door on the south side. Here are the chim-

THE BROTHER HOUSE.

furniture and its undeniable neatness give it a certain air of comfort. And here we discover, at last, a human being in the form of an elderly woman, who receives the intruders with more politeness than the blunt unconcern of most of them entitles them to. She speaks German in the Pennsylvania dialect, and answers all inquiries with kind readiness. We learn of her that several rooms in this and the other buildings are occupied by matrons and families that belong to the sect of the Siebentäger, or Seventh-day Baptists.

We now go through the building. On the left, or southern, side of the corridor, are a number of cells about ten feet long, five feet wide, and seven feet high, each provided with a narrow little window. The doors

neys and fire-places, which at present are provided with cooking-stoves of modern style.

Narrow and dark stair-ways lead to the upper stories, and in place of balusters, a rope serves to steady the steps in climbing. The arrangement of the rooms in the second and third stories is nearly the same as on the ground floor. A large number of them are vacant or stored with old furniture, spinning-wheels, or household utensils. The loft, which forms the fourth story, extends over the entire length and breadth of the house. The beams and rafters of the roof are fastened together with wooden pegs—evidence that wood was preferred to metal, probably more from a consideration of economy than for any other reason. The flagons, goblets, trays, and com-

ILLUMINATED LETTERS.

munion vessels, then in use, even the candlesticks, forks, and plates, were also made of that material, and manufactured in the cloister itself. Hour-glasses were in common use, and some are still shown as relics of the olden time.

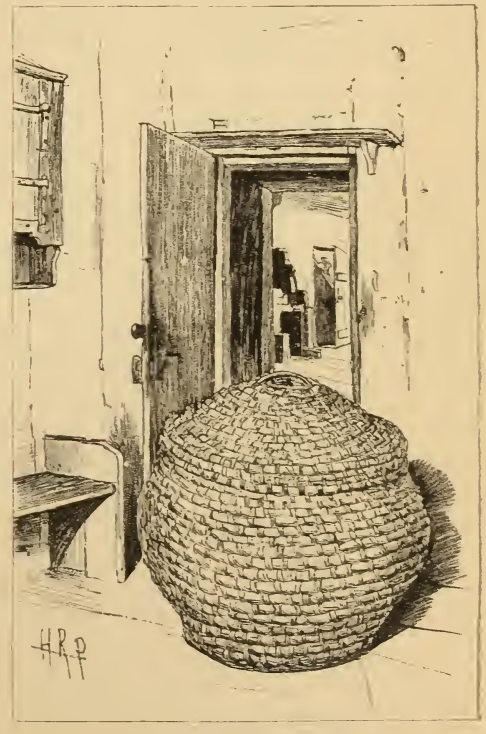
The house just described, we were assured by our informant, is the "Kedar" of old. "Kedar" was the first conventual building of the brotherhood, erected in 1735. The description, however, which the "Chronicon Ephratense" gives of its interior arrangements does not tally with our building. Again, it is surprising that neither Morgan Edwards, in 1770, nor the accurate Ebeling, in 1790, made mention of Kedar as one of the existing buildings; they know only Bethania, Saron, and Zion. The latter stood upon the hill, and has since been demolished. We are inclined to identify the southern building with Bethania.

We now crossed the meadow ground to take a look at the other large building, and on our way passed two dilapidated little dwellings, one of which probably is the one occupied for a long time by Conrad Beissel, the founder of the Ephrata cloister. The second convent we now came to, designated as "Saron," or the Sisters' house, is in its external appearance very much like its mate, Bethania—huge, oppressive, and gloomy, sheathed in black shingles, and dotted with little square windows. The rooms and passages, however, are quite differently plotted, and seem to have been altered to suit the uses of more recent times. In one of the cells we noticed a huge hamper; its size, in fact, compared with the dimensions of the door, was suggestive of the Chinese puzzle, the imprisoned ivory ball, much too large for the apertures of the incasing cell. How was this overgrown basket ever squeezed through so narrow an opening? It never was. An industrious nun, bent upon doing some good and useful work for the monastery, plied in her cell, for many days and weeks, her busy hands, to weave for domestic needs that extraordinary piece of wicker-work. She did not discover, until she had finished it, that it was much too large to pass through the door of her cell. And so it remains there, *in perpetuam rei memoriam.*

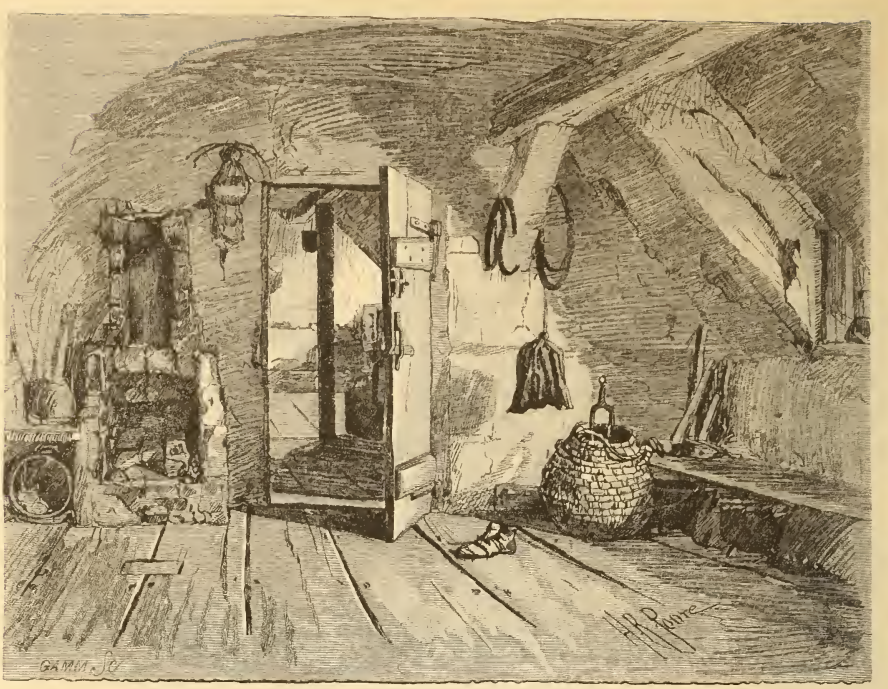
In Saron, also, a number of families and single women have been accommodated, and a kindly disposed old lady, who occupied one of the rooms, brought out some precious relics she had charge of, such as rare books printed on the press of Ephrata, and specimens of ornamental penmanship. Among the latter, the most gorgeous piece was a folio volume containing sample alphabets of various sizes and styles. The letters of the first alphabet are about twelve inches long, each filling a whole page. Around the heavier ground lines, graceful arabesques curl and twine, and charming little pictures of flowers and birds, or emblematical designs, are tastefully introduced within the flourishes. The title, executed in ornamental style, has this device for a motto:

"Des Christen A B C
Ist Leiden, Dulden, Hoffen.
Wer dieses hat gelernt,
Der hat sein ziel getroffen.
Ephrata, MDCCL."

("The Christian's A B C
Is: suffer, bear, and hope.
If you have mastered that,
Then you have reached the scope.")



SISTER PAULINE'S BASKET.



IN THE GARRET.

Rooms had been in the cloister set apart for writing, especially in large German text, and the artists had to use their own ingenuity and taste in building up decorative letters. Among the most skillful writers are mentioned sisters Iphigenia and Anastasia. The latter, born in Switzerland, was, at the time when she entered the convent, a young maiden of very comely appearance, and gifted with musical talents of a high order. As a nun she was at first called Tabea, and became quite a favorite of the spiritual head of the establishment, Conrad Beissel. Falling in love with a young man, Daniel Scheibly, whom the Brethren had recently "purchased" by paying his passage-money, she concluded to leave the Society and to marry the object of her affections. On the day set for the wedding, she took leave of her associates, no longer robed in the white garments of her order; but, at the interview with Beissel, her heart failed her, and, bursting into a flood of tears, she renewed the vow that confined her—and this time permanently—to the convent. Beissel declared that her tears had washed away the stain of her apostasy, and called her henceforth "Anastasia," *i. e.*, the resurrected.

We now turn to the place of worship, the so-called "Saal," which, from the beginning down to the present time, has continued to serve the purpose for which it was constructed; for, though the generation of Solitary Brethren and Sisters who once inhabited the convent and met at the Saal for worship has died out, the Seventh-day Baptists of the neighborhood convene here every Saturday for religious services. More than any other spot of old Ephrata, this hall retains the traces of the "genius of the place." The square room on the ground floor accommodates about sixty to eighty persons. The benches and tables of pine wood constituting its furniture are of the plainest workmanship, not painted, but, thanks to the regular application of the scrubbing-brush, white and smooth. The ceiling consists of solid planks dovetailed into the beams, which project into the room and run from one side to the other.

The charts with ornamental writing that cover the walls constitute the most striking feature of the Saal. They are executed in large German text, and exhibit either passages of Scripture or bits of original religious poetry. The following specimens are translated from the German originals:

"Here in the temple's sacred fold
We live, in purity united,
Snatched from the world's disastrous hold,
By flames of sweetest love requited.
In hope we live here, that above
To blessed freedom God will raise us
When, with our souls entranced in love,
We shall forever chant His praises."

Over the entrance hangs a tablet, inscribed with these verses:

"The house is entered through this door
By peaceful souls that dwell within.
Those that have come will part no more,
For God protects them here from sin.
Their bliss is found in flames of love
That spring from loving God above."

Besides the hymn-books of modern date which the congregation use at present, there lay on the tables copies of those curious collections of German songs, printed long ago in the monastery and in Germantown for the use of the monks and nuns, such as: "The Voice of the Lonely and Forsaken Turtle-dove, that is, of the Christian Church, set to rhymes. By a Peaceable Pilgrim,

OLD STILE AND GRAVE-YARD.

The praise of celibacy and the delights of seraphic love are the themes on which nearly all these inscriptions descant. Here is another:

"Our love is the crown with which we are blessed,
And wisdom the seal that God has impressed,
Our darling the Lamb, whom we trustingly heed.
We, purest of virgins, shall follow his lead."

Among the decorations of the room there are two curious allegorical pen-pictures, representing the life and destiny of the pious inmates of the cloister. The one delineates the narrow and difficult way to salvation; a multitude of Scripture texts along the road are designed to furnish the Christian pilgrim needful advice and comfort. The other picture represents the three heavens—in one, Christ, the Shepherd, gathers his flock; in the next may be seen a long array of persons in Capuchin dress (such as the Ephrata people wore) and heads of an innumerable host; the third shows the throne, surrounded by two hundred angels and archangels.

travelling to tranquil eternity, now collected and brought out for the use of the Solitary and Forsaken at Zion. Ephrata. Printed by the Brotherhood, 1747." It is a quarto volume of three hundred and fifty-nine pages. Its subdivisions have very quaint titles, *e. g.*: "Spiritual Bridal Wreath of the Sacred Virgins," "Occidental Morning Dawn," "Plaintive Heart-emotions of the Solitary under the Wings of the Deserted Turtle-dove." The author of this singular volume of hymns, the "Peaceable Pilgrim," is no other than Conrad Beissel, the founder and president of the monastery.

An even larger old hymn-book lay on the table, called the "Paradisiacal Wonder-Play; Ephrata, Typis et Consensu Societatis, A. D. 1766." It is a quarto of four hundred and seventy-two pages, containing seven hundred and twenty-six hymns of decidedly mystic character, four hundred and forty-one of which were written by Beissel. The Brother Song has two hundred and fifteen, the Sister Song two hundred and fifty, verses.

Another book found in the chapel is, in some respects, the most remarkable of them all. Its title is: "The Zionitic Incense Hill, or Mount of Myrrh. Germantown. Printed by Christoph Saur, 1739." This collection of hymns, which numbers about eight hundred, is the first book that was printed with German type in America. The manuscript was furnished by Ephrata brethren and the book was printed for them.

Before closing our tour of inspection, we must pay our devoirs to the grave-yard. The graves are marked with simple stones, inscribed with the names of the buried. A few have memorial notices. One of them reads: "Here rest the bones of the sublime philosopher Jacob Martin. He was born in Europe, June 10th 1725, and died a good Christian, July 19th, 1790." But this good Christian, not yet known to history as a great philosopher, is not the sage of Ephrata; we come to a larger monumental stone, and stand on the spot where *he* lies. "Here rests an outgrowth of the love of God, 'Friedsam,' a Solitary Brother, afterward a leader, ruler, teacher of the Solitary and the Congregation of Christ in and around Ephrata. Born in Eberbach, in the Palatinate, called Conrad Beissel, fell asleep July 6th, 1768, in the fifty-second year of his spiritual life, but the seventy-second year and fourth month of his natural life." Beissel's successor in the presidency of the convent has the following epitaph: "Here lies buried Peter Miller, born in the Oberamt Lautern, Palatinate, came as Reformed minister to America in 1730, was baptized into the congregation of Ephrata in 1735, and called Brother Jaebez; was afterward their teacher to his end. Fell asleep September 11th, 1796."

The reader's most natural query is,—Who were the eccentric occupants of these gloomy buildings? How came they to bid adieu to the world, to establish a monastic order, to glorify celibacy, to chant mystic hymns, and to keep the seventh day of the week as Sabbath?

In tracing the origin of the singular sect of Ephrata, we light upon the Dunkers, with whom they had some principles in common, and from whom they sprang by secession. The Dunkers are a species of Baptists, first heard of in Germany in 1708. At that time, under the laws of the empire, only three confessions were allowed free exercise of their religious worship,—the Catholics, the Lutherans, and the Reformed (or Calvinists); all others were considered unsound, erratic, and dangerous. In some localities, however, where the Government was more tolerant, or intolerance less vigilant, a variety of sects sprang up and in a few nooks of the wide empire the Separatists found not only an asylum but, through the sympathy of the rulers, a cordial welcome. This was, notably, the case in the territories of the Counts of Isenburg and Witsgenstein, in the south-western part of Germany. It was there, in 1708, that some Separatists, under the lead of Alexander Mack, a miller of Schriesheim, resolved "to establish a covenant of conscience, and to accept the teachings of Christ as a gentle yoke." They solemnized their union by triune immersion in the river Eder, near Schwarzenau, and this was the origin of the Dunkers (Dunkards, or Tunkers), which is merely a nickname for Baptists, fashioned after the Dutch term *Dompelaers*.

The founders of the society numbered only eight, but they soon received considerable accessions from the Palatinate, Würtemberg, and Switzerland. A distinguished member of the city councils of Strasburg, Michael Eckerlin, removed with his whole family to Schwarzenau, and joined the brethren by receiving baptism. Three of his sons became subsequently connected with the convent at Ephrata, where their independence of character involved them in serious dissensions.

A branch of the Schwarzenau Baptists established itself at Marienborn, in the principality of Isenburg, but the halcyon days of the young sect were followed by scattering storms. The members of the Marienborn society removed, in 1715, to Crefeld, a city noted for its tolerance to dissenters, and thence, in 1719, to Pennsylvania, amounting then to about two hundred souls. These were the first Dunkers in America; they settled mainly in Germantown, where they organized a congregation in 1723, holding their meetings at first in the house of John Pettikofer, with Peter Becker for their minister. In 1729, the members of the parent society of Schwarzenau, who had meantime changed their original quarters for a refuge in Frisia, followed the example of their brethren and emigrated to Pennsylvania.

The first Dunkers had not been many years in their new homes when the schism occurred that led to the separate organization of the Seventh-day Baptists under Conrad Beissel, and subsequently to the establishment of the Order of the Solitary. Before we follow up this branch, which has left such curious traces at Ephrata, some remarks on the original Dunkers, on their principles, mode of worship, and present condition, may not be inappropriate.

With the advancing tide of settlers, the Dunkers spread into the interior counties of

Pennsylvania, and the yearly conference, which deals with the common concerns of the Brotherhood, was, in course of time, alternately held east and west of the Susquehanna River.

Gradually they found their way into Virginia and the Western States, where they are now most numerous, and it was deemed fair to hold the conference every second year west of the Ohio. Now, when Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Idaho, California, Oregon, and Washington Territory have their Dunker congregations, it has been suggested that the conference be held alternately west and east of the Mississippi River. For there is now, as of old, only one yearly conference in which the whole body of the Dunkers is represented. In the present year it met at Ashland, Ohio.

They number in the United States—for they also have missions in Europe—about two hundred thousand souls, with nearly two thousand ministers to attend to their spiritual wants, none of whom receives a salary.

The Dunkers profess all the fundamental principles of Christian faith. They do not, however, believe in the eternal perdition of souls. They have no creed apart from the Bible. What they aim at is to restore Christianity to its primitive purity, scrupulously to follow the precepts and the example of the Saviour, and to make religious conviction the sole arbiter of conduct in life. They still baptize the neophytes—as their founders at Schwarzenau did—by immersing them three times, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Their holy communion is preceded by the rite of foot-washing. A curious discussion has of late engaged their attention —upon the question whether the single or the double mode has the better claim for observance. When the same brother both washes and dries the feet, it is the single mode; when each service is performed by a separate person, they call it foot-washing by the double mode. It is not to be understood, however, that the whole congregation is thus served by one or two of their number. There are enough of them going around with tub and towel to finish the ceremony within a reasonable time. Foot-washing and communion are always administered in the evening; during the afternoon a love-feast is held, in commemoration of the supper which Jesus took with his disciples. There is no binding rule as to the choice of food, though among the viands lamb has the preference. Even such luxuries as coffee and butter, unknown to Scriptural Palestine, are not objected to. After the love-feast comes the "holy kiss." The minister gives it to the brother that sits next to him on the right; he applies it, in turn, to his neighbor, and thus it is passed along the line, and by the last is carried to the next table. The same order is observed with the women, with the exception that the first kiss is applied by the minister to the first sister's hand.

The Dunkers live in peace with one another, and seek no redress, for injury done to them, by recourse to law. Disagreements among themselves are settled by the elders, whose decision is final. Only in exceptional cases, and after permission is granted by the officers of the congregation, do they institute lawsuits against the people of the world. Like the Quakers and Mennonites, they refrain from taking or administering oaths, from participating in warfare, or giving countenance to it in any manner whatever. They are averse to accepting public office. Their poor they support. Among their host of two hundred thousand people, there is not one who suffers from want. Even those who fail in business are aided to make a new effort, and such assistance may be lent three times. After the third failure, they take it to be the will of God that the unfortunate brother shall not succeed.

Cultivating the utmost simplicity in raiment, food, and other exteriors of life, they look upon all glitter and display with misgivings; so much so that the Philadelphia Exhibition was generally avoided by the people of the Dunker persuasion as one of the world's vanities. Some superstitious notions of old days, *e. g.*, that the use of lightning-rods betokens a defiance of God's power, still linger among them, though they do not object to roofs as a protection of their barns and houses against the wrath of storms. The wearing of broad-brimmed hats and of long beards is a custom generally adhered to, but not enjoined by rule.

One of their prejudices, viz., that ignorance is the healthiest condition of man in this preparatory stage of life, has well-nigh passed away. As a proof of the value they attach to education, we may mention their collegiate institutions, in which ancient and modern languages, as well as scientific branches, form a part of the regular course, open to both sexes. There are three of these in operation, one at Mount Morris, Ogle County, Illinois, with two hundred and fifteen students during the last session; another at Ashland, Ohio, with two hundred students, and a third at Huntington, in Pennsylvania, with about one hundred and seventy-five students. Till about 1850, the Dunkers published not a single paper; now they have nine, and several juvenile or Sunday-school papers.

While the Dunkers of the old stock have thus grown in numbers and in consequence,

FOOT-WASHING.

with the fairest prospect of further expansion, the Ephrata sect, which occupies us more particularly at present, is all but defunct, and its most remarkable phase, the adoption of monastic life and the countenance given to celibacy, curious as an anomaly of Protestant Christianity, and still more so as a wrinkle of early colonial history, has long ago passed out of existence.

The founder of the Order of the Solitary was Conrad Beissel, born at Eberbach in 1690. In Germany he does not appear to have been affiliated with the Dunkers, but was strongly impressed with the emotional religion of the Pietists and the mystic antics of the "Inspired." He was by trade a baker, and during his apprenticeship as gay as any other young fellow at the fiddle and the dance. In 1715, a change came over him that brought him into contact with the ranting convulsionist Frederick Rock, with Dr. Carl, the editor of the Berlenburg Bible, and others of the "awakened." His biographers assert that the regenerating grace which he experienced improved even the quality of the bread which he baked at Heidelberg. Weary of the petty persecution which the peculiar brand of his piety drew upon him, he emigrated in 1720, with Stiefel and some other friends, to America. In Germantown, he learned the art of weaving from the Dunker preacher Peter Becker. But finding that the brethren of that persuasion were too much entangled in the concerns of the world, he left, in 1721, the habitations of men, to lead a contemplative life at Mill Creek, a streamlet that empties into the Conestoga River, in Lancaster County. He became a hermit, having no other company than that of his *fidus Achates*, Stiefel.

Beissel had a recent example for such a course. John Kelpius, the hermit of the Wissahickon, who had come to Pennsylvania in 1674 with about forty associates, bent like himself upon parting fellowship with the world, had closed his eyes in 1708, leaving, as the "Chronicon Ephratense" has it, a good odor of saintliness behind him. Born at Denndorf, in Transylvania, he studied divinity at Altorf under the famous theologian John Jacob Fabricius, obtained the degree of Magister in 1689, and after writing some Latin treatises on professional subjects, plunged into the mystic and millennial speculations of his age. Hence he was drawn into companionship with the so-called Philadelphic League, an association of mystics, which was headed in England by Jane Leade. After his arrival in America he withdrew from the world, settling, with his companions (several of them men of learning), on the ridge near the Wissahickon, where he awaited with his friends the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom. Probably led by his speculations on the mystic import of the "Woman in the Wilderness" (Revelation xii. 6), he named his little flock the "Society of the Woman in the Wilderness." A cave on Mr. Prowatsain's property, upon the high bank that skirts the Wissahickon, is pointed out as the place

where Kelpius spent his days in retirement.

When Kelpius died (1708), his flock gradually fell away, and most of them became forgetful of their vows of celibacy, or, as the "Chronicon Ephratense" caustically puts it, "took to woman." Some, however, like John Selig, Conrad Matthaei, and Geisler, remained single and continued in their hermit life. There is a tradition that connects a spacious stone building on the Wissahickon, situated on high ground near a woody, romantic dell, with the pious anchorets, who belonged either to the "Woman of the Wilderness" or were allied with the Ephrata order of monks. It is popularly called the "Monastery," though no particulars as to its use for such a purpose are known. That the example and the fancies of John Kelpius, his ascetic habits, his advocacy of a virgin life, his faith in direct inspirations and his mystic musings, had a direct and strong influence on Conrad Beissel, is admitted in the Chronicles of Ephrata:

"The same spirit that was astir in Kelpius, of blessed memory, entered into our leader."

MEMENTOS OF BEISSEL.

We left the latter rusticating in the solitude of Lancaster County, near the Conestoga River. His hermit's life suffered a short interruption by a trip he made with Isaac von Bebbern to Bohemia Manor, in Cecil County, Maryland, where the Labadists under Peter Schlüter had formed a settlement conducted on principles of religious communism. It is quite likely that the impressions then received were not lost upon him, and had something to do with the social features of the Ephrata cloister.

Soon after his return, Conrad Beissel submitted to baptism in the Pequea Creek (November 12, 1724), at the hands of Peter Becker, the Dunker minister of Germantown, who, with about a dozen of the Brethren, traversed the land upon a missionary errand. The baptism, however, meant no peace, nor fellowship. It was followed by controversies among the men and quarrels among the women. Soon Beissel began to assert his authority and to preach doctrines distasteful to the Dunkers, urging celibacy and the observance of Saturday as Sabbath. A little knot of followers that gathered about him were baptized or rather rebaptized by him, in May, 1725. With this the step was taken that called into existence the sect of Seventh-day Dunkers. Conrad, who was chosen their leader, became greatly impressed with his own importance and discoursed like a prophet, sometimes with closed eyes, as if he were in a trance. With the Dunkers, the questions at issue were discussed with a good deal of acrimony. Once an over-shrewd fellow, Joel, who sided with Beissel, proposed to settle the dispute by a sort of ordeal. With a keen perception of the better odds, quite surprising in so God-fearing a man, Joel addressed Brother Hildebrand thus: "If God shall on this day do a miracle upon my person,—if here in your presence and before your eyes I fall down like a dead man, and if by your prayers I be made to rise up again to life,—then God hath *not* sent me to you, and *you* are God's people. But if I do *not* fall down like a dead man, but go fresh and hearty out of that door, then shall ye know that God hath indeed sent *me*, and that *ye* are not the people of the Lord." Upon this, Joel, turning his back upon them, went out of the door fresh and hearty. It does not appear that the proof offered convinced the other side.

Between the Dunkers and the Seventh-day sectaries there were constant bickerings; even among the saints themselves not everything

was lovely. Perhaps this was the reason why Conrad, in the year 1732, seven years after the origin of the Conestoga schism, took a sudden resolution and again withdrew into the wilderness. He went about eight miles farther north, and selected a spot on the river Cocalico for his lonely musings. At that time there was but a single hut there, which was occupied by a hermit named Elimelech. The good man ceded his abode to Beissel, neither of them knowing that the ground upon which they stood would a few years afterward become famous as Ephrata, a name chosen by the founder in allusion to Psalm 132, v. 5 and 6.

Conrad cleared a piece of ground, tilled it with his hoe, and felt happy to think that he was once more upon the track of the Egyptian anchorets. In this frame of mind he composed many hymns redolent with the flowers of mysticism.

THE SUPPOSED MONASTERY OF WISSAHICKON.

Speaking of Beissel's poetry, a remarkable fact of American bibliography, not generally known, deserves to be mentioned. The earliest book of German poetry written and published in America has Conrad Beissel for its author. It is a small duodecimo volume, printed by Benjamin Franklin, in 1730, in Roman type. Its very curious fanciful title is too long to be transcribed here in full. It begins:

"Göttliche Liebes und Lobesgethöne."

(Godly Lays of Love and Praise.)

Our fugitive from the world was not long allowed to enjoy his solitude. First, several brothers followed, then came Anna and Mary Eicher, whose yearning after spiritual comfort left them no rest. To silence the tongues of scandal-mongers, a little house was built for them on the other side of the Cocalico River. Revivals in the Tulpehocken district, in Falkner Swamp (Hanover), and Oley, brought quite an influx of converts, and the neighborhood became dotted with numerous huts and block-houses, the abodes of solitary brethren, or of families that held to the new doctrine. The several settlements were called Massa, Zohar, Hebron, and Cades, names which have now disappeared. Prominent among those who joined the Seventh-day Dunkers were the three brothers, Israel, Samuel, and Gabriel Eckerlin, the same who had with their father Michael removed from Strasburg to Schwarzenau, to be baptized by Alexander Mack. One of them, Samuel, suffered imprisonment in Lancaster, with another Dunker, for working on Sunday—a martyrdom which any of the fraternity would fain have undergone for the sake of bearing testimony.

In 1735, at length the first cenobitic building was put up, and called Kedar. It contained a large room for religious exercises, halls for love-feasts and foot-washing, and several cells for solitary brethren and sisters. The latter occupied the upper story. In place of the "Babylonian garments," a peculiar style of dress was then introduced, designed to hide as much as possible "the loathsome image revealed by sin," *i. e.* the body. The outer vestments of the brethren consisted of a

long, close robe, fastened with hooks down to the feet, with narrow sleeves, and a collar fitted close to the neck; also a girdle around the waist. During service they donned a cape that reached to the waist. Attached to the robe was a cowl, or hood, that hung down over the back, and could be drawn over the head for protection. The habiliments of the sisters were similar; their hoods, however, were round, not pointed like those of the brethren. During work they were thrown back, but at the approach of a stranger were modestly pulled over head and face "to hide the loathsome image." A large veil, reaching front and back to the girdle, and resembling a scapular, completed the sisters' costume. The garments used in winter were of wool; in summer, linen or cotton. Both sexes went barefooted during the warm season.

In course of time more buildings were added, partly for worship and the accommodation of members, partly for industrial objects. In 1738 a house of considerable dimensions, called Zion, was built upon the hill; another, Pniel, mainly intended for religious service, went up in 1741. Saron, erected in 1745, was to be a convent for self-divorced couples, the men and the women living in different parts of the house. But the plan would not work; the letters of divorce were, by mutual consent, torn up, and the couples returned to their homesteads, and Saron was then assigned to the Sisters. It is one of the buildings yet standing. As new quarters were required for the monks, also, Bethania was built in 1746. It was constructed in a very durable manner, and contained accommodations for one hundred solitary brethren. The industry of the cloister consisted mainly of the operations of the flour, paper, saw, and fulling mills, and of a flaxseed-oil press. The honest dealing of the monks did much toward reconciling outsiders with their religious notions.

It is time to say something about the latter subject. The cloister people of Ephrata and those allied with them are generally known as Seventh-day Dunkers, as if they had differed from the parent sect in no other way than the observance of Saturday as Sabbath. There is, however, another and a very important element that entered into the religion of the Ephrata society. They were in intimate accord with the mystics of the period, such as Hochmann von Hochenau, Gottfried Arnold, Frederick Rock, and, through them, with Gichtel and Jacob Boehme. The craving after direct communion with God, the sinking of self into the awful abyss of the Infinite, the extinction of individual will and thought, finally the unutterable ecstasy of delight springing from the "divine intoxication"—all these features of mystic religion were present in the lessons which Conrad Beissel imparted at Ephrata. In order to express by words the rapturous feelings engendered in this state of mind, the vocabulary of love was ransacked for terms and metaphors of delight. Gottfried Arnold, or some older mystic, had invented the divine "Sophia," to whom the devotees paid their homage in impassioned strains of love-songs. This "Sophia," together with the "Lamb" and the "Bridegroom," was addressed by the pious monks and nuns of Ephrata in the most endearing language of amorous transport. Hence we have the paradoxical fact that the same people who repudiated all earthly love as impure, and threw a slur on married life, would sing at their devotions hymns like these:

"Sweet are the kisses of thy mouth,"

and

"Come, O dove, come, my love,
Let me give you a thousand kisses."
"Mouth to mouth and heart to heart," etc.

Beissel's style of preaching is thus described by Israel Acrelius, who gives an abstract of his sermon: "All this was spoken with an incomparable rapidity, in hasty language, with rapid gestures. Now he struck out his hands, now he pressed them to his breast, now he placed them on one side, now upon the other, and now upon both."

The cloister was no resort for idlers. Every one was put to work—on the farm, at the mills, at a trade, in the copying-room, in the printing-office, or the bindery. At the beginning the land was cultivated without the aid of horses or oxen, the brethren themselves, in a long line, dragging at the plow. There was no end of building, and all the labor was done by the members of the order. Thus the little colony made itself independent of the outside world. The printing-press of Ephrata was put up about 1742, and turned out a number of works now eagerly sought after by bibliophiles.

The singing-schools were founded in 1742. Conrad Beissel had much musical talent, and composed upward of four hundred airs, upon a system of his own. The effect of the choral singing at Ephrata is described as peculiarly sweet and pleasing: it obtained celebrity and attracted many strangers. A visitor thus speaks of it in a letter to Governor J. Penn: "The performers sat with their heads reclined, their countenances solemn and dejected, their faces pale and emaciated from their manner

of living, the clothing exceeding white and quite picturesque, and their music such as thrilled the very soul. I almost began to think myself in the world of spirits."

The note-books required by the choirs were written with the greatest neatness by sisters appointed for that duty. Each air is headed by the first line of the hymn that is sung by it, with a number that refers to the respective page of the "Zionitischer Weihrauchhügel," their great hymn-book. The note-books contain upward of four hundred hymns, all composed by Beissel.

The fare at the convents was of the plainest kind, and consisted almost entirely of bread, mush, and vegetables. Animal food, even milk and cheese, was thought to clog the spirit and to injure the voice. None of the forty-eight drinks which the Rev. I. Acrelius enumerates as in use in Pennsylvania at that time, passed muster in Ephrata. The pious inmates of the cloister were to

THE SISTERS.

THE BRETHREN DRAGGING AT THE PLOW.

confine themselves to the "innocent pure water." But in this particular, the founder himself appears during his advancing years to have fallen from grace.

Among the peculiar customs of the monastery were the love-feasts and the night-services. The former were occasionally held at the private dwellings of affiliated brethren, but generally in the halls of the convent, sometimes for one sex, at other times for both. The night-services were held whenever Father Friedsam (Beissel) gave the summons. This he often did without previous announcement by pulling at a bell-cord that stretched from his dwelling to the male and female convents. All had to get up, even at or after midnight, and appear in the dress of their order. At such occasions, small paper lanterns that were kept in the cells were used.

A very notable fact it is that communism was in practical operation at Ephrata for a considerable number of years. The "Chronicon Ephratense," speaking of the events of 1740, says: "Then, at first, was property declared to be a sin. All was put in a common stock, and by what it yielded into the treasury all the necessaries of life were purchased for the brethren. The same was done in the convent of the sisters. This arrangement lasted many years, till at length it became necessary to reëstablish property, though to the present day everything, in the main, is held in common." As the "Chronicon" was published in 1786, practical communism had then existed forty-six years. Those that entered the order had to surrender all they had, absolutely and without reserve. It may be news to the historians of socialistic theories that, a century before Proudhon ventured upon the bold paradox that property is theft, property had been branded at Ephrata as sin.

When Conrad Beissel died, in 1768, the office of *Vorsteher* devolved on Peter Miller, who had been prior for many years. Miller came to America in 1730, as minister of the Reformed Church, and settled at Tulpehocken. A revival carried him, in 1735, with Conrad Weiser, the Indian interpreter, and others, into the Ephrata sect; Weiser soon retraced his steps, but Miller proved to be a permanent acquisition. He was a fine classical scholar, was well versed in theology, and became a member of the American Philosophical Society, and led an unblemished life. But in spite of all this, the monastery continued to decline. That part of Lancaster County where it was planted remained no longer the wilderness that had proved so attractive to the enthusiasts of a former period. The world's people gained upon them, and time came when a few decrepit monks and nuns,

that lingered in the desolate convents, or basked upon the greensward, were looked upon as living curiosities. In 1814, with the consent, and at the request, of the few surviving members of the monastery, the Assembly of Pennsylvania incorporated the "Seventh-day Baptists of Ephrata" as a society, to succeed in the rights of property of the dying-out fraternity. Since then, the land and the buildings of the "Solitary" have been held in trust for "religious, charitable, and literary objects."

We shall close our account of Ephrata with a story or tradition of Revolutionary times, still living among the people of the neighborhood, and sure to be repeated to the curious inquirer or accidental wayfarer. It concerns the pious prior of the cloister, Peter Miller. If not true in its details, it still has, as may be inferred from the pages of the Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, a grain of fact for its foundation, and will serve to show the high estimate placed on the Christian character of one of the principal men of Ephrata.

A person by the name of Michael Widman, an inn-keeper in Cocalico township, and a stanch member of the Reformed Church, had conceived a spiteful feeling against Miller, because he had renounced the Reformed creed to join the Ephrata brotherhood. When abusive language failed to ruffle Miller's temper, Widman went so far as to spit in his face, without, however, provoking the saintly prior to anger, or acts of retaliation. During the Revolution, Widman espoused the cause of the Tories; we know this to be the case by repeated references to his disloyalty in the Colonial Records. It is said that he acted as spy to the British, or committed some other treasonable offense that, when he fell into the hands of the Americans, brought him under sentence of death. When Peter Miller heard that the life of his former assailant was in jeopardy, he went to General Washington to plead for the remittance of the death penalty. The General remarked that the state of public affairs demanded the severest measures against spies and traitors, "otherwise," he added, "I should cheerfully release your friend." "Friend!" replied Miller,—"he is

INTERCESSION FOR AN ENEMY.

the only enemy I have," and, upon further inquiry, he related what indignities he had suffered from the man for whose life he was now pleading. It is further reported that so shining an example of forgiveness made a deep impression upon Washington, and that the pardon was granted. Miller, with several of his brethren, arrived upon the ground where the gallows was erected for the traitor's execution just in time to announce the General's act of grace, and to save the wretched Widman from an ignominious death. It appears from the Colonial Records that the latter did not, however, escape all punishment. His property, consisting of several farms and houses, was confiscated, and sold in March, 1780.

THE LINCOLN LIFE-MASK AND HOW IT WAS MADE.

My first meeting with Abraham Lincoln was in 1858, when the celebrated senatorial contest opened in Chicago between him and Stephen A. Douglas. I was invited by the latter to accompany him and his party by a special train to Springfield, to which train was attached a platform-car having on board a cannon, which made considerable noise on the journey. At Bloomington we all stopped over night, as Douglas had a speech to make there in the evening. The party went to the Landon House, the only hotel, I believe, in the place at the time.

While we were sitting in the hotel office after supper, Mr. Lincoln entered, carrying an old carpet-bag in his hand, and wearing a weather-beaten silk hat,—too large, apparently, for his head,—a long, loosely fitting frock-coat, of black alpaca, and vest and trowsers of the same material. He walked up to the counter, and, saluting the clerk pleasantly, passed the bag over to him, and inquired if he was too late for supper. The clerk replied that supper was over, but thought enough could be "scraped up" for him.

"All right," said Mr. Lincoln; "I don't want much."

Meanwhile, he said he would wash the dust off; he was certainly very dusty, for it was the month of June and quite warm. While he was so engaged several old friends, who had learned of his arrival, rushed in to see him, some of them shouting out, "How are you, Old Abe?" Mr. Lincoln grasped them by the hand in his cordial manner, with the broadest and pleasantest smile on his rugged face. This was the first good view I had of the "coming man," though I had seen him at a distance, and passed him on the sidewalk in Chicago a few days before.

Mr. Lincoln was on the platform in front of the court-house when Mr. Douglas spoke, and replied to the Senator when he had finished. I regretted to hear some hard words which passed between them while Mr. Douglas was speaking.

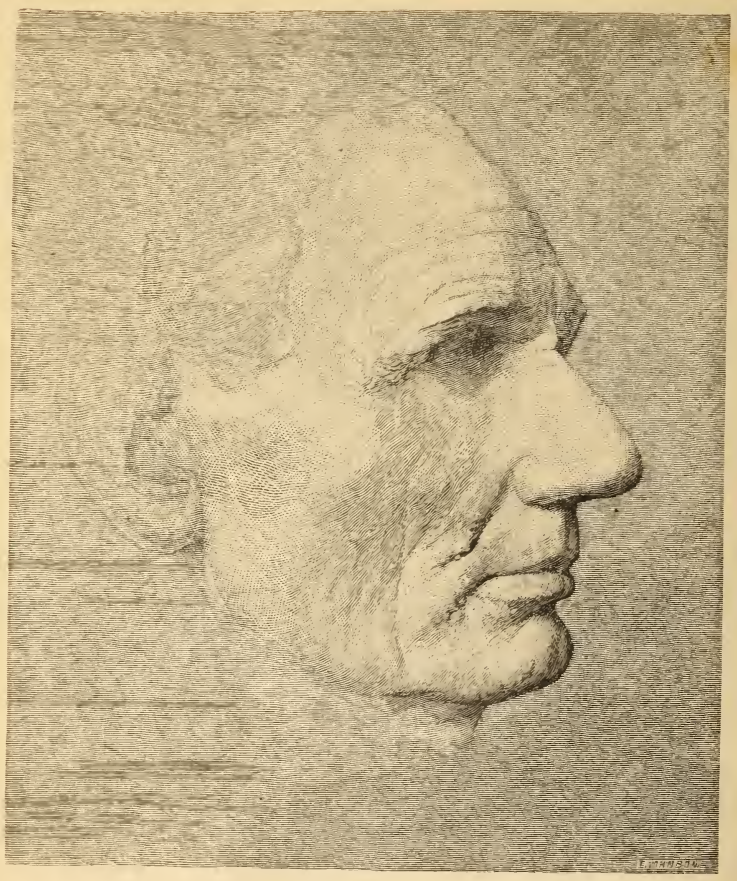
The next day we all stopped at the town of Lincoln, where short speeches were made by the contestants, and dinner was served at the hotel, after which, and as Mr. Lincoln came out on the plank-walk in front, I was formally presented to him. He saluted me with his natural cordiality, grasping my hand in both his large hands with a vice-like grip, and, looking down into my face with his beaming dark, dull eyes, said:

"How do you do? I am glad to meet you. I have read of you in the papers: you are making a statue of Judge Douglas for Governor Matteson's new house?"

"Yes, sir," I answered; "and sometime, when you are in Chicago and can spare the time, I would like to have you sit to me for your bust."

"Yes, I will, Mr. Volk—shall be glad to, the first opportunity I have."

All were soon on board the long train, crowded with people, going to hear the speeches at Springfield. The train stopped on the track, near Edwards's Grove, in the northern outskirts of the town, where staging was erected and a vast crowd waiting under the shade of the trees. On leaving the train, most of the passengers climbed over the fences and crossed the stubble-field, taking a short-cut to the grove, among them Mr. Lincoln, who stalked forward alone, taking immense strides, the before-mentioned carpet-bag and an umbrella in his hands, and his coat-skirts flying in the breeze. I managed to keep pretty close in the rear of the tall, gaunt figure, with the head craned forward, apparently much over the balance, like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, that was moving something like a hurricane across that rough



LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. (HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.)

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